Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-10. (canceled)

11. (new) A method for backup switching spatially separated switching systems, comprising:

providing a pair of switching system arranged in a one-to-one redundancy, the pair

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comprising:

a first switching system in an active operating state, and

a redundant switching system in a hot standby operating state;

establishing a first communication between a real-time monitor and the first switching system; and

changing over to the redundant switching system after a loss of the communication between the monitor and the first switching system.

12. (new) The method according to claim 11, further comprising exchanging cyclical test messages between the monitor and a first central controller in the first switching system and a second central controller in the redundant switching systems.

13. (new) The method according to claim 12, further comprising receiving by the monitor, a positive acknowledgment in response to the test message from the active switching system.

14. (new) The method according to claim 13, further comprising receiving by the monitor, a negative acknowledgment or no acknowledgement in response to the test message from the hot-standby switching system.

15. (new) The method according to claim 14, further comprising

establishing a second communication between the monitor and a network management;

reporting the loss of communication to the active switching system from the monitor to the network management; and

sending a changeover from the network management command to the monitor and a crossconnect device.

16. (new) The method according to claim 13,

wherein the change over to the redundant switching system is controlled via the monitor by acknowledging cyclical requests by the hot standby switching system with a positive acknowledgement, and

wherein central controller of the hot-standby switching system changes over to the active operating state.

17. (new) The method according to claim 16, wherein automatic switching back to the configuration existing before the loss of communication does not occur after an end of the loss of communication.

18. (new) The method according to claim 17, wherein the end of the loss of communication is reported to the network management.

19. (new) The method according to claim 11, wherein automatic switching back to the configuration existing before the loss of communication does not occur after and end of the loss of communication.

20. (new) The method according to claim 19, wherein the end of the loss of communication is reported to the network management.

21. (new) The method according to claim 11, wherein a network management system initiates the changeover via the monitor.

22. (new) The method according to claim 21, wherein the network management evaluates a backup switching requirement of a plurality of monitors and the change over is made only if any of the monitors that can access the network management makes the demand.